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ABSTRACT

This paper examines four major research studies spanning approximately 45 years which provide solid evidence that democratic schooling is possible and is an extremely important factor in the education of young citizens for a democratic society. The objectives, methodology, limitations, and results of each study are examined. From the studies, the author draws insight into the construct "democratic school" and perspectives on the attributes of democratic schooling. In the first study reviewed, Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1938-1939) assessed the comparative effects on student group behavior of three types of classroom climates generated by three differing leadership styles--democratic, autocratic, and laissez faire. Results showed that students who experienced democratic leadership were more effective in accomplishing their social goals and work goals. In the second study examined, Halpin and Croft (1963) obtained descriptive data on differing types of school climate and the human relations associated with each type by studying the behaviors, perceptions, and attitudes of teachers and principals. From this study we obtain an image of a democratic school which by its very organizational structure has a kind of democratic personality. In the third study (1974-1975), Ehman and Gillespie collected questionnaire data from high school students concerning their political attitudes and school characteristics. The study results provide a vision of a school that is a democratic system. The fourth and last study (1978) reviewed school violence and school climate. From this "Safe School Study" school policies which will create an environment that minimizes student frustration and aggression and maximizes identity with the school are envisioned. (RM)

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DEMOCRATIC SCHOOLING AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION:

WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH REVEAL?

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Throughout twelve years in elementary and secondary schools American students continually hear and read about principles of democratic society and processes of democratic governance. Yet, there are few schools which systematically provide opportunities for students to experience democratic participation. Such principles as representative government, majority rule, minority rights, and equal protection are taught about in formal school courses. But there are precious few schools which make the development of intellectual and practical skills of democratic living an objective of the total school experience.

The idea of democratic schooling has long stood in the realm of powerful education propositions - sometimes as a critical response to stifling autocracy in the schools and sometimes in defensive reaction against the swing to the polar opposite, permissiveness. The idea of the school as a democratic training ground flourished through the progressive era in education courted by Dewey, Rugg, Merriam, Counts and others, and it has survived through a half dozen decades buffeted or buoyed by the larger social-political concerns of cold war, hot war, economic depression, holocaust, and control of the world's resources.

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The last few years have produced another upward blip on the tiger-toothed pattern which traces the rise and decline of interest in the effects of the social-political environment of the schools (See for example, Merelman, 1980; Jennings, 1980; Kutnick, 1980). As the debate again intensifies, we are justified in asking for more than propositions. What of the evidence? Can it be done? Can classrooms be conducted in a democratic manner and still carry on the business of education? What happens when students as part of their schooling are given opportunities to experience democratic participation and reflect on it? Do democratic school experiences have an effect on student behaviors and on their political attitudes? Beyond all of the dreaming, debating, and hypothesizing, is there any evidence that more democratic climates in school and classroom can contribute to democratic citizenship education?

This review of research is not aimed at summarizing the results of the great number of studies conducted over the past 50 years which relate to democratic schooling. Hence, it is not my purpose to synthesize relevant political socialization research and those numerous educational studies which deal with tracking, school size, teaching techniques, and school governance which have implications for democratic education. Rather, I wish to examine in some depth several selected studies which span the decades. The studies were selected for the breadth of their conceptualization, because at first look they appeared to offer conceptual frameworks deserving consideration in the eighties. Specifically, I wish to examine each of four studies through three different lenses: one which focuses on the research context -- the concerns of the times and the

researchers; another which focuses on the research methods used; and another which focuses on the results, particularly linkages and constructs which may enrich theory and research today.

The Democratic Classroom

The classic experiment on democratic schooling takes us back to the mid-thirties in a middle-sized midwestern city where a social psychologist and his university graduate students were studying the effects of teacher-leadership style on classroom climate. Lewin, Lippett, and White conducted a series of experiments designed to assess the comparative effects on student group behavior by three types of classroom climates generated by three differing leadership styles--democratic, autocratic, and laissez faire (Lewin, 1938; Lewin, Lippett, and White, 1939; White and Lippett, 1960).

It is interesting to examine the social-political context in which this research was conceptualized and conducted. It was a time when the intolerance and human persecution of Fascist regimes in Germany, Italy, and Spain had intensified the interest of many American intellectuals in identifying education processes that would best produce and preserve democratic group relationships. Kurt Lewin, the psychology professor who headed the research project, had left the University of Berlin in 1933 at the time when Hitler and the Nazis had begun persecuting Jews on the faculty there. In the U.S. on the faculty of the University of Iowa, Lewin passionately expressed his dismay at the passive acceptance of totalitarian regimes by the people living in those European countries and called for intensive research into group climate factors and their

apparent influence on the attitudes and behavior of young people and adults (Lewin, 1938).

Method

The study included two experiments, but the first experiment was essentially a trial run. The second was better controlled and more extensive. Therefore, I will restrict my remarks to the second experiment which is the one most widely referred to in the literature.

The students who participated in the study were volunteers from fifth grade classes from two Iowa City schools. They signed up for membership in afterschool clubs which were organized ostensibly for carrying out creative projects such as designing and making theatrical masks, constructing model airplanes, or building furniture for the club room. Based on sociometric data obtained from the school, students were assigned to groups which were roughly equivalent, with five members in each of four clubs.

It is indicative of the social context in which the research was conducted that only fifth grade boys were invited to join the clubs. The researchers made no effort to explain why they did not attempt to include females in the experiment. To promote group loyalty each group was given a meeting room, and each chose a club name and decorated their club room.

A counterbalanced design was used in the experiment whereby each group would be exposed to each treatment. A male adult leader was assigned to each group. The leader utilized specific leadership behaviors designed to create either an autocratic or a democratic climate in the group. The clubs met for three six-week periods. After each six-week period

the leaders were rotated so as to expose each group to differing leadership styles and differing classroom climates.

A potential problem with rotation of treatments is that groups may be affected by the sequence in the experiment. That is, previous experience may influence behavior in the portion of the experiment which follows. Lewin, Lippett, and White, however, sought to control for the influence of sequence by designing the rotation so that each club had a different sequence of leadership types.

An interesting aspect of the research method is that most of the data used in this 1937 study were obtained using ethnographic techniques which have become so popular today. Data were collected by teams of observers in each club room. Two stenographers recorded in shorthand what was said in each club meeting. A third person, who had some experience in working with children, kept a running anecdotal record of what occurred in the group. Two additional observers noted social interactions and the frequency of activity of subgroups. In addition, after each club meeting the leader wrote up a brief account of any occurrences which seemed significant to him.

Leadership Behaviors

The *autocratic* leader dictated all club policy and gave step-by-step orders on what was to be done by whom for each club project. He determined which students would be allowed to work together without consideration of their desires. When he expressed praise or criticism it was in personal rather than objective terms, and he generally did not offer suggestions for improvement. As the researchers pointed out, "The expression of approval and disapproval implies an emphasis on a

status hierarchy, and suggest that the leader is setting himself up as a chief judge..." (White and Lippett, p. 35).

In the *democratic* group, policies were determined by group discussion and group decision, with the leader offering "guiding suggestions." Generally the leader assisted the group in defining overall goals and then suggested alternative means to attaining them. Club members were then free to make their own decisions. When tasks were divided, the boys would work with whomever they wished. Another activity of the democratic leader was to give information--when it was asked for and when it seemed helpful or needed. Generally he tried to stimulate self-direction by encouraging free discussion, group decision, and majority vote. The leader also attempted to be objective or "fact-minded" when praising or criticizing so as to encourage learning of individual group criteria for evaluating their work without dependence on the adult leader.

The *laissez faire* climate for student group work was not originally planned in the study. It emerged in the first experiment when one of the leaders attempted to conduct a club democratically and was totally unsuccessful in providing leadership. Club members lapsed into uncooperative and "extremely individualistic behavior," and, finally, into anarchy. The researchers decided that in the final design it would be valuable to have a "passive" or *laissez faire* leader, particularly in contrast to the democratic leadership style which was active and far more demanding. The laissez faire leader took no part in the goal setting process, did not aid in the decisions on how to accomplish goals, and had nothing to say about the selection of work partners. He supplied information only when asked, gave no work assistance, and did not praise or criticize. He made no attempt to regulate or appraise the activities in the club. The laissez faire climate allowed nearly total freedom for individuals

to choose goals and activities without concern for the group.

Results

Observations revealed that under *autocratic leadership* the group behavior was generally submissive. Students were motivated to work on their projects only when the leader was present. Under the leader's eye and when told specifically what to do, they worked efficiently, but when he left the room, work slowed down considerably. Some members exhibited sullen hostility toward the leader. A much greater amount of tension and hostility was expressed among students in the autocratic climate, and they tended to center hostility on one member. The group was also less stable and developed less cooperative group structures.

The students who experienced *democratic leadership* were more effective in accomplishing their social goals and work goals. They demonstrated greater cohesiveness and a sense of group accomplishment which was expressed in phrases like "our club" and "we decided." They were less apathetic than the boys in the autocratic situation and more inclined to express individuality. The democratic climate stimulated more participation, and the students showed a greater sense of fairness and less concern over status. The exchanges of criticism were objective and less personal and biting than in the other groups. Also, these students showed a greater readiness to share group property.

Under *laissez faire leadership* the students attempted some group decisions but soon lapsed into disruptive behavior. Eventually members became aggressive toward each other, a change which from the observations was attributed to idleness, frustration over the lack of accomplishment, and absence of a respected adult. The group achieved none of its goals.

Behavior of the members became status minded as order broke down. The same students who were disruptive and uncooperative in the laissez faire climate tended to stay on task with their team when they were in the democratic climate. In the laissez faire group few students would clean up at the end of a session, but in the democratic climate group members voluntarily worked together to clean up the club room.

Lewin, Lippett, and White concluded that democratic leadership in a club (or classroom) is not only more productive, but it is less stressful and more satisfying to the members. They also concluded from the experiment that human interaction in a real democratic climate, because it stimulates motivation through participation, is generally more efficient than autocracy. They urged care in defining democracy so as to differentiate it from laissez faire and clarified that democratic behavior does require order and an authority structure. Their advice to the teacher was to continually seek to broaden the base of participation in decision making, whenever participation is actually functional, but to exert active leadership, and unhesitatingly, without any feeling of guilt, use "natural authority" whenever the situation calls for firm control or for "swift, decisive, coordinated action" (White and Lippett, p. 292).

Beyond the descriptive data and the helpful recommendations for teachers and other small group leaders, Lewin and his associates took a highly questionable leap in their reasoning to attempt to define national character, and to offer political formulas for building resistance to fascist and communist autocracies (Lewin, 1936; Toulmin, 1948; White and Lippett, 1960). Nevertheless, the experiment must be viewed as a valuable milestone. The techniques used and the conceptual and empirical outcomes

became essential building blocks in field theory and the study of group dynamics. The powerful constructs of life-space and group dynamics motivated and influenced thought and investigation for years to come. For social science educators the much discussed notion of democratic schooling became a researched reality with more specific definition, and it became a more viable alternative with clear implications for the education of citizens in a democracy.

School Organization

Moving forward twenty years to the late fifties places us in the period of white collar organizational and administrative concerns; a period of emphasis on personal relations. It was the era of other-directedness or concern over what other people think. This was a period in which business and industry sought to "use psychology" to minimize conflict in interpersonal dealings and define patterns of relationships that would produce smooth and efficient operations. It was the era of "the organization man."

Social and educational researchers also turned to organizational and administrative analysis. Organizational theory gained prominence as a research framework. Analysts examined the ways that human relations could be and were manipulated. New journals appeared, such as *Administrative Science Quarterly*, heralding the rise of organizational science. In this post-Sputnik, science-minded era, Halpin and Croft (1963), supported by a grant from the U.S. Office of Education, launched a pioneering study which investigated the organizational climate of the school.

Conceptualizing schools as having a kind of personality derived from the climate of social interactions within them, Halpin and Croft

studied the behaviors, perceptions, and attitudes of teachers and principal to obtain descriptive data on differing types of school climate and the human relations associated with each type.

Method

The research context was a relatively rigorous one in which they took care not to define *a priori* types of school climates, but using factor analysis and data from a carefully developed questionnaire, they sought to identify descriptors that would provide a multi-dimensional image of all apparent types in their sample of seventy-one schools.

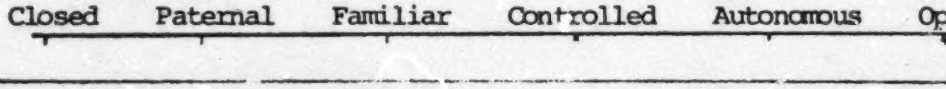
The survey instrument, the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ), was developed based on school observations and previous research. It was pilot-tested to refine the original 600 items to 150 "most effective" items, pilot tested again, and revised to a 69-item questionnaire with eight subtests. It was then administered to 1151 teachers and principals of 71 schools. Items describing teachers measured four climate dimensions: 1) disengagement, the tendency to just go through the motions and not be involved; 2) hindrance, the feeling of being burdened with busy work by the principal; 3) esprit, the morale and feeling of accomplishment on the job; and 4) intimacy, the extent of friendly social relations which they enjoyed with each other. Items describing the principal assessed four different dimensions: 1) aloofness, the degree of distance which the principal kept from the staff; 2) production emphasis, the directiveness and closeness of supervision of staff; 3) thrust, the efforts to motivate and move the staff; 4) consideration, the degree to which teachers were treated humanely and kindly.

Results

From analysis of the responses Halpin and Croft identified six organizational climate types. The types were not named until detailed profiles had been generated from subtest analysis. Finding that the types fell along a continuum ranging from high flexibility, openness and tolerance to oppressive, closed and rigid (a continuum which they first tagged as "dead vs. alive"!), they drew on theoretical constructs from Lewin and Rokeach to name the climate types. Another link to Lewin's research is evident in the conceptualization of the principal as group leader, key actor, and major climate maker.

The continuum of six school climates and the characteristics of each type are summarized below.

Figure 1: Types of School Climates



Closed Climate. Characterized by very closed and non-genuine relationships between principal and teachers.

Teachers - obtain little satisfaction from their work, fail to accomplish much, have a low morale, have a high turnover rate, may have some friendly relations with colleagues but generally have a low esprit de corps, achieve mainly "housekeeping" work such as required reports.

Principal - is highly aloof and impersonal, stresses hard work and emphasizes production but is usally not a model worker, sets down arbitrary rules, fails to provide adequate leadership, inconsiderate of the social needs of the teachers who tend to regard him/her as a phony.

Paternal Climate. Characterized by autocratic and generally non-genuine relationship with the principal as a persistent watchdog.

Teachers - are split into factions, do not work well together, are not burdened by reports and busy work because principal does them, have few responsibilities—principal assumes most of them,

gain inadequate satisfaction from their work, have given up trying and let principal take care of things, do not enjoy friendly relations with each other.

Principal - is continually checking, prying, and monitoring, intrudes in all areas, does not let teachers lead or make decisions, wants to know everything, fails to motivate teachers, tends to be over-solicitous in matters or personal consideration rather than genuinely concerned.

Familiar Climate. Characterized by conspicuous friendliness of teachers and administrators but lack of direction toward school goal achievement.

Teachers - are friendly with each other and fairly relaxed in their working environment, morale is average due to social satisfaction rather than accomplishment, little is required of them, perceive the principal as a "good guy" rather than as a leader.

Principal - wants to be liked by everybody, offers little direction, little guidance and few rules, does not emphasize production or encourage it, is highly considerate of the teachers personally but fails to motivate them to define or accomplish goals professionally.

Controlled Climate. Characterized by pressure for achievement and hard work. However, the climate is more open than closed.

Teachers - are highly task oriented, but have much busy work and paperwork to do, have little feeling of camaraderie and few social relations, do obtain job satisfaction from task accomplishment.

Principal - is dominating, directive, and quite inflexible, delegates few responsibilities, remains aloof from teachers, requires excessive paperwork, centers power in the principal's office and determines both ends and means, has low consideration of personal social needs of teachers.

Autonomous Climate. Characterized by freedom of teachers to develop their own internal leadership patterns.

Teachers - have a high esprit de corps and good social relations, are involved in their work and achieve their goals, have little hindrance from administrative paperwork, make many middle level decisions about use of supplies, etc., among themselves.

Principal - is genuine but businesslike and quite aloof, sets an example of working hard, is flexible but provides leadership and control, sets up guidelines which teachers can follow and then with a minimum of monitoring allows them to set their own pace, is considerate of teachers,

Open Climate. Characterized by democratic relationships, teachers and administrators working well together to accomplish their goals.

> Teachers - work well together without bickering, are not burdened by routine busy work but are assisted by the principal in accomplishing their objectives, are highly motivated to work and overcome difficulties, job satisfaction is considerable and they are proud of the school.
>
> Principal - is genuine in that personality and leadership role are well integrated, sets an example of hard work, can criticize or praise in a considerate manner, is not aloof but involved and can show compassion while providing clear direction, allows appropriate leadership to emerge from teachers and does not need to monitor them closely for them to be highly productive.

While this major research undertaking contributed highly valuable descriptive data, limitations of the study should be noted. All of the schools in the survey were elementary schools. Secondary schools, which are usually larger and differently structured, may produce different climate types or different characteristics within types. Further, it is unclear how schools were selected. Apparently, based on the acknowledgements, they were from three states, but whether they were considered representative of any particular area population is not discussed. Perhaps the greatest limitation for purposes of evaluating democratic schooling is that no student data were collected, and consequently, there is no information about how each type of climate affects students.

The questionnaire responses from teachers regarding behaviors of the principal, and vice versa, record their perceptions and are not necessarily accurate accounts of actual behavior. Halpin and Croft argue, however, that the leader's actual behavior is less important than group members' perceptions of that behavior. For it is their *perception* that will determine their reactions and thus shape the climate of the school (p. 9).

Despite limitations, the survey gives us a good deal of insight into the attitudes of educational professionals in varying interactive settings. Comparative student effects can only be logically deduced, but it seems to me, the great value of the school climate typology is that it motivates a comparative review of one's own school and the behaviors of the administrators and teachers within it.

The School As Political System

Approximately a decade after Halpin and Croft's study, Ehman and Gillespie (1974; 1975), funded by NIE, launched a study of the effects of school climate conceptualized in the context of political theory. Models from the social sciences heavily influenced both curriculum development and research in social education in the late sixties and early seventies. Drawing on systems theory, which had gained prominence in political science and sociology through the sixties, the researchers utilized a macro-process conceptualization of schools as the basis of their study. They specifically focused their analysis not on the individual and the individual's interaction with the school environment but on the total school and the interaction of groups (students, teachers, administrators) in school political life.

School political life was defined as having two elements: political resources and political activities. Viewing schools as mini political systems, the researchers sought to assess the patterns of group interactions with political resources and participation and to determine the influence of these patterns on the political perceptions and attitudes of students.

Based on conceptualizations of differing distributions of political resources and political participation, Ehman and Gillespie hypothesized *a priori* four types of school political systems: 1) *elite* where administrators have a monopoloy on participation, leadership, communication, and influence and decisions are enforced by coersion; 2) *bureaucratic*, where administrators and teachers dominate the decision making, and position or power is the basis of influence; 3) *coalitional*, where various groups participate in the system, bargain over issues which arise, and no group dominates continually; 4) *participant*, where students have an ongoing major role in the decisions made and are able to assume leadership roles in the system.

From the stated purposes of the study (Ehman & Gillespie, 1974) it is evident that its theoretical context was also influenced by an educational concept which by the early seventies had captured the concern of many educational theorists and researchers, *the hidden curriculum*. Ehman and Gillespie hoped to provide empirically grounded constructs, which would specify elements of the hidden curriculum, and which ultimately could be utilized by school personnel to maximize student participation and increase student control over resources thus making schools more democratic systems. The projected output of more democratic schools would be citizens with increased experience and skill in democracy.

Method

The study utlized paper and pencil surveys supplemented with observation data. The researchers contacted a number of high schools which were within easy travel distance and to which they had initial research

access. Preliminary information about the internal organizational characteristics, size, and social-economic makeup of each school was obtained from a questionnaire filled out by the principal.
On the basis of principal questionnaire data, the apparent school climate type was determined for each school. The main study involved thirteen high schools, considered to represent the range of previously conceptualized four types of school political systems.

Questionnaire data were collected from approximately 200 students in each of the thirteen schools. Three questionnaires surveyed student political attitudes, school system characteristics, and within school political characteristics. An 80-item political attitude instrument was used to measure political interest, trust, social integration, and political confidence, each with two subtests - one relating to society in general and the other related to the school. Sampling procedures varied by school. Respondents were randomly selected from a total student list in some schools. In others, intact class groups were randomly selected. In each school all grades above grade eight were included, but a few schools contained only grades 10-12 or 11-12. The sample totalled 2,546 students including 1,245 females and 1,301 males.

One question on the school system questionnaire asked students to list the five groups most active in making important decisions in school. On the basis of these responses, a few groups in each school were selected for observation while notes were recorded on prepared observation sheets.

Results

When Ehman and Gillespie, (1975) analyzed the student data, they found that the *a priori* types did not fit the data. All of the schools

had characteristics that were essentially bureaucratic. Political participation and leadership were dominated by administrators; leadership was based mainly on position; most school decisions were shaped by a few groups or a few individuals; information and communications were controlled mostly by administrators, secondly by teachers, and lastly by students.

Within the basic bureaucratic type, however, the researchers found evidence from factor analysis of school system response scores that there were several differing patterns of participation and political resource distribution. So, they defined a range of political system types *within the bureaucratic type:* 1) a more elite type which had a minority rule system with power as the basis for leadership; 2) a more bureaucratic type where a combination of principal and teacher domination were found, and power or position were the main bases of influence; 3) a more coalitional type where administrators, students, and sometimes teachers bargained for and shared leadership and where merit tended to be the basis of influence; 4) a type which they called "directed participant" which had many democratic features but the ultimate decision power was centered in a small group, usually the administrators; and 5) a more ideal participant type where a relatively high level of student participation, leadership, communication, and influence were consistently found but status or position tended to be the basis of influence.

A percentage analysis of responses by school produced some unanticipated internal pictures of the school political systems. Students of all types of schools perceived student government groups, rather than administrative or teacher groups, as the most active decision-makers in school. Another surprise was that in the few schools where student academic groups

were perceived as playing a major role in decision making, athletic groups were also considered active.

A correlation analysis of the attitude test scores showed fairly high relationships between school political attitudes and general political attitudes, especially in the subtests for political interest and social integration. Of course, no directionality could be asserted, but the researchers hypothesized that student attitudes formed by school experiences are later generalized to society, a proposition which calls for further testing.

Comparing mean scores by school type, Ehman and Gillespie (1975) concluded that school types made a difference in student political attitudes; in particular, that the more bureaucratic and directed participant systems produced more negative student political attitudes. Unfortunately, these conclusions were drawn from cursory examination of the means. Standard deviations were not calculated; the number in each group, range of means, and potential error effects were not considered. The attitude means appear to be clustered slightly above the mid-point on the scale and variations appear too minor to make assumptions of differences without a more rigorous test (e.g., see Hepburn and Napier, 1982, for a comparison technique using confidence intervals of attitude mean scores.)

The study has some other methodological problems including: a vagueness about the intended representativeness of the schools selected, inconsistencies in sampling procedures between schools, no information about numbers of responses by school or by school climate type. Also the observation data, which would undoubtedly be a valuable supplement to the typology of bureaucratic systems was not reported. This study

was a rather large undertaking, and I suspect that much more analysis could be conducted with the data. Also, portions of the research could bear replication and reexamination using similar or alternative techniques with different school samples.

While the Ehman and Gillespie study does not give definitive information about the output of a more democratic school system relative to other types, the study does provide a tested typology of schools based on *student* perceptions. It does not surprise us that all of the schools in their study turned out to be bureaucratic political systems. However, within these essentially bureaucratic systems they found important differences—differences in the decision, communication and leadership processes, and differences in the way that influence was distributed and used. These internal differences are important considerations as we evaluate the potential for making schooling a more democratic experience.

School Violence and School Climate

The fourth and last study selected for review was chosen because it was conceptualized and designed in the context of increasing crime and violence in the schools. In many large city schools today where teachers and principals are embattled and where students themselves walk in fear of each other, talk about democratization of the school may seem unrealistic. In communities where school assaults, drug problems, and vandalism runs high, the main concern is for order and discipline in the schools. In these communities proposals to make the schools more democratic are likely to be equated with permissiveness or misguided idealism.

The study was designed in an era when many young urban teenagers run a greater risk of violence in school than elsewhere in the community. In a typical month 5,200 teachers are physically attacked, 130,000 teachers have some personal object stolen at school, 282,000 secondary students are attacked, and 2.4 million have something stolen (Boesel, 1978).

Concern over school violence and crime had reached such proportions by the mid-seventies that a bill was introduced in the House of Representatives and passed by Congress in 1974 mandating that the Department of Health, Education and Welfare determine the extent, seriousness, and costs of school crime and assess the means of reduction being used and their effectiveness. It was in this context of mounting evidence of school violence and rising attention in the media and in government that the National Institute of Education (NIE) undertook The Safe School Study (Boesel, 1978). The vast national study set out to assess the extent and patterns of crime and violence in American schools and to examine school characteristics associated with greater or less crime and violence. The objective was to provide guidance for policy initiatives which might reduce violent and criminal acts in the schools.

Method

NIE designed a three-phase study in which three types of data were collected. First a mail survey of principals of a representative national sample of more than 4,000 public elementary and secondary schools was conducted. The principals were asked to report in detail on the incidence of school disruptive activities for a one-month period. The nine months of the school year were randomly assigned to the various principals.

In the second phase, on-site surveys of a representative national

sample of 642 public junior and senior high schools were conducted by field workers. Along with principals, students and teachers were also surveyed by questionnaire, each reporting any incidents occurring to them in a one-month period and responding to other questions about school characteristics.

In the third phase, ten schools were selected for case studies. Most of these had experienced serious problems with violence and crime but had been able to make great improvements in a short time. Other schools in the sample had tried to reduce the violence and crime but had failed. The case studies were aimed at getting a detailed picture of what had worked and what had failed in the efforts to reduce crime and violence.

Of special interest here are the results from phase two. Data from 604 of the schools involved in the second phase were used to examine factors possibly affecting school violence and crime. From student and teacher data, several scales were constructed to measure: amount of violence and crime in the community, governance and rule enforcement in the school, sense of internal school control, relevance of school subjects, fairness of school environment, and student and teacher interaction. The scales served as independent variables in a multivariate analysis of the dependent variable—extent of school violence and crime. The multivariate technique allowed an analysis of the effect of one factor while holding other measured factors constant. Researchers could then determine which of the factors were characteristic of high-crime or low-crime schools.

This type of statistical analysis is not without its problems. The assessment of numerous variables tends to give the impression that all influencing factors have been taken into account, but important variables may remain unmeasured. The relationships should not be considered causal.

High associations between two or more variables may be related to another variable which has not been measured. Another limitation is that the school characteristics analysis was based entirely on written questionnaire responses without use of the student and teacher interviews, even though the inteview responses were considered more accurate on certain questions. The questionnaire data were used because the larger number of responses gave more reliable estimates of differences between schools.

Results

The Safe School study turned up some interesting relationships between characteristics of the social-political climate and structure of secondary schools and rates of student violence and crime. (Boesel, Chapter 5). The findings in five areas are briefly summarized:

1. Disciplinary Policies. A powerful predictor of school crime was the type of disciplinary structure found in the school. Highly disciplined schools were not necessarily associated with student rebelliousness against their strict regulation. In fact, highly disciplined schools which had systematic, school-wide, consistent disciplinary policies which were perceived by the students as fairly enforced were associated with low rates of crime and violence. Notable in the characteristics of these schools were: an efficient principal who has the respect of the staff, a coordinated effort by teachers and administrators, a relatively high degree of teacher satisfaction with the administration in regard to matters of curriculum and discipline.
2. Fairness. Perceptions of fairness played an important role,

especially in regard to discipline. In schools where students complained that rules were arbitrary, discipline was unfairly administered, and rule enforcement by teachers was unnecessarily punitive, there were higher rates of violence and greater property loss.

3. School Reward Structure. There was less violence in schools in which students expressed that getting good grades was a measure of their success. However, vandalism was highest in the schools where students desired good grades. Also vandalism ran high in schools where students expressed a strong desire to be school leaders, and in schools where teachers indicated that they used grades as a disciplinary measure. These findings suggest that if schools emphasize academic performance in an effort to reduce violence, they run the risk of increasing vandalism. However, it is not so simple. Apparently, students in a more competitive and academic school environment are more intensely affected by perception of fairness. If they perceive that awards are doled out unfairly, they tend to vent frustration on the school itself.

4. Instruction. Violence and crime were higher in schools where teachers had larger classes and had contact with larger numbers of students per week. It was projected by the analysts that when teachers meet with numerous large classes that they are unable to establish personal relationships with students, that a sense of impersonality and distance is conveyed, and violence and destruction become easier. Another factor in the area of instruction was the content of the curriculum.

Violence was higher in schools where students perceived that teachers were not teaching what students want to learn. It should be noted that student interests were not narrowly limited to careers. In fact, some schools were providing basic skills and a "general liberal education" in a manner which students considered relevant to their needs.

5. Internal Control. Student violence was higher in schools where students perceived that they could not influence what would happen to them. Alternately, violence and robberies were less likely in schools where students expressed relatively high feelings of internal control. Feelings of internal control were associated with not being treated like "kids," with feelings that their school was preparing them for the future, and with feelings that they had some influence on what happens in the school. The researchers found no evidence that more democratic forms of school governance were associated with lower school crime, but they noted that it is the schools in which students feel that they have no control over their circumstances which tend to have more violence. Further investigation into the effects of student participation in school decision making was encouraged.

In summary, from the Safe Schools study we find that the school is a learning environment for attitudes and behaviors which will be internalized by students and ultimately transferred to the larger society. School is the locale where students learn whether rewards are related to efforts or not; whether the rules governing their daily activities make sense and are defensible or are arbitrary, inconsistent, and unfair. School is the

environment where students gain a sense of whether they as individuals can have some say about what will happen to them, and whether the classes they attend and the school work they do have any bearing on what will happen in their lives in the future. School is the long-lasting, year-after-year experience which, as a result of the ways in which students are treated by teachers, administrators, and the whole educational system, gives them a lasting impression of their worth.

CONCLUSIONS

What can be drawn from these four major research efforts spanning approximately 45 years and reaching acrosss several academic disciplines? First of all, we may gain a broadened awareness of and insight into the construct "democratic school." Lewin, Lippett, and White present us with an image of the democratic school as a collection of classrooms conducted by teachers who utilize democratic *leadership style*. The teacher's role is crucial, because the teacher's way of managing the class group sets the climate of self-direction, free exchange of views, egalitarian treatment of peers, and at the same time, maintains order and direction in the group. Students have a choice of what they will do and with whom. The school is made up of class groups where students identify with the groups, where students are motivated to participate and where learning goals can be met with efficiency.

From the study by Halpin and Croft we obtain an image of a democratic school which by its very *organizational structure* has a kind of democratic personality. Within the school organization teachers and administrators work cooperatively to accomplish learning goals. The principal as leader of the organizational unit plays a pivotal role. Clear direction is

provided by the principal who encourages teacher self-rule in many areas. Bickering, prying, and distrust are minimized while openness, productivity, and job satisfaction are maximized. Presumably, living and working daily in such a school organization, the student will be treated in the same manner by administrators and teachers and will gain the same democratic attitudinal and behavioral attributes.

Ehman and Gillespie provide us with a vision of a school that is a democratic *system*. The inputs are both the formal school structure and its informal activities which tend to increase student leadership, communication, and influence, and maximize student participation in decision making. The gatekeepers are administrators who encourage student and teacher participation. The immediate outputs are more positive attitudes of social integration, political trust, and political confidence. The ultimate output of the system is a citizenry with more positive democratic attitudes and improved skills for democratic participation.

From The Safe School Study we can envision the democratic school as one where a number of enlightended school *policies* are applied to create an environment which tends to minimize student frustration and aggression and maximize identity with the school. We get a picture of a school with a consistent and fairly enforced disciplinary policy, a fairly conducted and realistic adcademic reward system, a high degree of student and teacher interaction, opportunties for student contributions to policy, and students who feel they belong in the school and feel that they can influence what happens to them. It is a school with a very low rate of violence and crime and an effective training ground for democratic citizenship.

Second, from differing research contexts we can gain differing perspectives on the atrributes of democratic schooling. We have the

view from the classroom, a description of individuals interacting in small groups, their conversations, their behaviors as they respond to the teacher and to each other. We have the view from the principal's office and from the teacher's lounge. We learn how these major actors in the school perceive each other—their special concerns, their fears, their needs. We also gain some insight into student perceptions—how they see the power of their own social and governance groups in the school, how they perceive the power of teachers and administrators, and their attitudes toward school and society.

Beyond conceptualization and perspective taking, these studies can be helpful to social science researchers in the eighties to inform and guide us in designing constructive replications of research of the past, generating new hypotheses for testing, and devising appropriate qualitative and quantitative research designs. Limitations of sampling, data collection, and analyses must be taken into account before using these studies as the basis for further research. Also, some results may be time bound. Schools and students have changed considerably since the thirties or even the sixties.

The four studies do leave us with solid evidence that democratic schooling is more than just the philosopher's dream, that it is possible, and in some cases it is feasible. Moreover, the studies clearly imply that democratic schooling in all four conceptualizations is an extremely important factor in the education of young citizens for a democratic society.

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